

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-23. (cancelled).

24. (original): A semiconductor device serving as an intermediate product in which at least a first interlayer film, an etching stopper film, a second interlayer film, a first hard mask and a second hard mask are built up on a substrate in the order mentioned, said second hard mask having a trench pattern that exposes said first hard mask, comprising:

a light absorbing sacrificial film, which has an etching rate different from that of a photoresist and is removable by use of a stripping solution, formed so as to be embedded in the trench pattern in such a manner that the overall surface of said film will be flat; and

a photoresist formed on said light absorbing sacrificial film and having an aperture pattern, which is disposed over the area of the trench pattern, having an opening width less than that of said trench pattern.

25. (original): A semiconductor device serving as an intermediate product in which at least a first interlayer film, an etching stopper film, a second interlayer film, a first hard mask and a second hard mask are built up on a substrate in the order mentioned, said second hard mask having a trench pattern that exposes said first hard mask, comprising:

a sacrificial film, which has an etching rate different from that of a photoresist and is removable by use of a stripping solution, formed so as to be embedded in the trench pattern in such a manner that the overall surface of said film will be flat;

an anti-reflective film formed on said sacrificial film; and

a photoresist formed on said anti-reflective film and having an aperture pattern, which is disposed over the area of the trench pattern, having an opening width less than that of said trench pattern.

26. (original): A semiconductor device serving as an intermediate product in which at least a cap film, a first interlayer film, an etching stopper film, a second interlayer film and a hard mask are built up on a substrate in the order mentioned, said hard mask and second interlayer film having a trench pattern that exposes said etching stopper film, comprising:

a light absorbing sacrificial film, which has an etching rate different from that of a photoresist and is removable by use of a stripping solution, formed so as to be embedded in the trench pattern in such a manner that the overall surface of said film will be flat; and

a photoresist formed on said light absorbing sacrificial film and having an aperture pattern, which is disposed over the area of the trench pattern, having an opening width less than that of said trench pattern.

27. (original): A semiconductor device serving as an intermediate product in which at least a cap film, a first interlayer film, an etching stopper film, a second interlayer film and a hard mask are built up on a substrate in the order mentioned, said hard mask and second interlayer film having a trench pattern that exposes said etching stopper film, comprising:

a sacrificial film, which has an etching rate different from that of a photoresist and is removable by use of a stripping solution, formed so as to be embedded in the trench pattern in such a manner that the overall surface of said film will be flat;

an anti-reflective film formed on said sacrificial film; and

a photoresist formed on said anti-reflective film and having an aperture pattern, which is disposed over the area of the trench pattern, having an opening width less than that of said trench pattern.